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INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 5575  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3092  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 4378  
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 2136

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 001718

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STATE FOR NEA/MAG

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS LEAVE ESTABLISHMENT INTACT

REF: A. RABAT 1641 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. 03 RABAT 2143

Classified By: A/Polcouns Ian McCary for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Traditional establishment parties prevailed on September 8 in the race for one-third of the seats in the Chamber of Councilors, Morocco's upper house of parliament. The Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) failed to gain any seats. However, given the elite and complex nature of these indirect elections, the PJD's poor showing on September 8 does not necessarily indicate any decline in the party's electoral potential for the far more important lower house elections in late 2007. End Summary.

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MOI Presents Results  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Minister of Interior Chakib Benmoussa announced September 9, less than 24 hours after the polls had closed, the official results of the September 8 indirect elections for 90 of the 270 seats in the Chamber of Councilors, the upper house of parliament. The final vote tally, broken out by the number of seats each party or labor union obtained, follows below: (Where known, the number of outgoing seats are also reported to demonstrate the net increase or decrease of seats for each party.)

- Istiqlal Party (PI): 17 seats (12 outgoing seats)
- Popular Movement Union (UMP): 14 seats (24 outgoing seats)
- National Rally of Independents (RNI): 13 seats (17 outgoing seats)
- Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP): 11 seats (7 outgoing seats)
- Constitutional Union (UC): 6 seats (4 outgoing seats)
- Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS): 4 seats (6 outgoing seats)
- National Democratic Party (PND): 4 seats (4 outgoing seats)
- Al-Ahd Party: 4 seats (2 outgoing seats)
- Democratic Forces Front (FFD): 2 seats (0 outgoing seats)
- Environment and Development Party (PED): 2 seats (0 outgoing seats)
- Democratic and Social Movement (MDS): 1 seat (4 outgoing seats)
- Democratic and Independence Party (PDI): 1 seat (0 outgoing seats)
- Citizens Forces (FC): 1 seat (0 outgoing seats)
- Party of Renewal and Equity (PRE): 1 seat (0 outgoing seats)
- Non-Affiliated: 0 seats (1 outgoing seat)

-- Union of Moroccan Labor (UMT): 3 seats  
-- Democratic Confederation of Labor (CDT): 2 seats  
-- General Union of Moroccan Workers (UGTM): 2 seats  
-- National Union of Moroccan Labor (UNTM): 1 seat  
-- Democratic Federation of Labor (FDT): 1 seat

13. (SBU) According to a Ministry of Interior (MOI) communique provided to the media on September 9, a total of 637 candidates registered with the MOI during the official candidacy period; 523 candidates registered for the 81 seats decided by municipal councils and professional chambers, while 114 candidates registered for the 9 seats reserved for labor union representatives. After briefly reviewing the elections results, the Minister recalled the steps the MOI had put in place to ensure the transparency and credibility of the elections, and acknowledged the role local officials played in supporting the government's efforts to prevent irregularities. The Minister acknowledged instances of attempted fraud during the campaign period and election day, but characterized them as individual incidents not representing a general atmosphere. The MOI maintained that allegations of irregularities will be further investigated to ensure that activities related to the elections were conducted in accordance with the law.

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Ruling Majority Maintains Position  
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14. (C) After the votes were counted, it was evident that the traditional leading political parties had generally maintained their positions from the latest round of upper house elections. Of the 90 seats up for election, Istiqlal won 17 seats, followed by the Popular Movement Union (UMP) who won 14 seats, the National Rally of Independents (RNI) with 13 seats, and the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) with 11 seats; resulting in 55 seats (over 60 percent of the total) for parties of the ruling government coalition. With no single party gaining a majority of seats, and 20 seats being filled by councilors reelected to another 9-year term in parliament, the elections have not significantly shifted the political landscape of the upper house.

15. (SBU) Despite gaining the second largest number of seats, UMP may have suffered the largest blow to their presence in the upper house. While losing 24 outgoing seats, UMP was only able to reclaim 14 seats, resulting in a net decline of 10 councilors for the party, which currently possesses the lower house's largest number of representatives. Similarly, upper house heavyweight RNI also suffered a setback, losing a net total of 4 seats. Interestingly, 8 of the 9 representatives who recently resigned from the lower house to run for a seat in the upper house (ref A) succeeded in their quest to obtain a nine-year term in the Chamber of Councilors. Since last week's elections, however, much of the debate among political parties surrounding the validity of these types of electoral maneuvering tactics has subsided.

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PJD and Female Candidates Come Up Short  
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16. (C) Although not totally unexpected, the PJD walked away from the elections nearly empty-handed. The PJD presented a total of 41 candidates for seats elected by municipal council and professional chamber electoral colleges, however, none of the PJD's candidates garnered enough votes to win a seat. On the bright side for the PJD, Abdellah Attach, representing the National Union of Moroccan Labor (UNTM) - which is affiliated with the PJD, secured one of the 9 upper house seats reserved for labor union representatives. (Note: The PJD's inability to obtain multiple seats in this round of upper house elections likely reflects the party's limited presence, compared to other parties, on the local level in municipal councils and professional chambers, in large part due to its standing after the 2003 municipal council elections (ref B). End Note.)

¶17. (SBU) Women candidates did not fare well in the elections. Of the 17 female candidates (2.6 percent of total candidates), only Khadija Zoumi from the General Union of Moroccan Workers (UGTM) - affiliated with Istiqlal, gained the necessary votes to win a labor union seat. The overall number of female councilors did not increase, however, as El Hayat Dlimi (UMP) failed to be reelected. Zoumi will join Khadija Aamiri (UMT) and Zoubida Bouaayyad (USFP) in the upper house, leaving the total number of female councilors at ¶13.

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Limited Political Party Reaction  
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¶18. (SBU) In sharp contrast to the period leading up to September 8, where several party representatives questioned the upper house's mandate, most political parties have not reacted to the election results presented by the MOI. Not surprisingly, Istiqlal and the USFP, two of parties who profited most from the elections, have openly expressed their pleasure with the results. Istiqlal's French-language daily L'Opinion, ran headlines on September 11 touting Istiqlal as the biggest winner of the elections, as well as highlighting that Istiqlal's performance was a direct result of the party's 2003 municipal council achievements, where Istiqlal won the largest share of seats.

¶19. (SBU) Nevertheless, public questioning of the upper house and its role in the legislative system is real. In a September 13 interview with French-language daily L'Economiste, president of the Citizens Forces (FC) party Abderrahim Lahjouji explained that since his party's creation in 2001, it has supported the "removal" of the upper house. According to Lahjouji, "the experience of the upper house in not encouraging," hinting that the institution is rife with manipulation. Other parties, while having questioned the legitimacy of have a bicameral parliamentary system before the elections, have thus far refrained from openly commenting on the issue.

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NGOs Protest Process  
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¶10. (SBU) According to local press reports, approximately 20 NGOs participated in a sit-in September 9, organized by the Moroccan Center for Democratic Elections (CMDE), to denounce what they termed "fraudulent practices" and "crimes against democracy" associated with the upper house elections. During the sit-in participants reportedly called on civil society actors to create "an action plan aiming to preserve our rights to democracy and democratic representatives." The exact number of people involved in the sit-in could not be confirmed.

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Comment  
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¶11. (C) Given the elite and complex nature of these indirect elections, the PJD's poor showing on September 8 does not necessarily indicate any decline in the party's electoral potential for the far more important lower house elections in late 2007. End Comment.

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